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Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations: financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Support account for peacekeeping operations

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/54/648) on the revised post requirements for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000. During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification.

2. The Committee recalls that the General Assembly in its resolution 53/12 B of 8 June 1999 approved requirements in the amount of $34,887,100 for the support account, including 400 posts, for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000. The proposed budgets for peacekeeping missions and the support account were estimated at the time at approximately $650 million for the period. As indicated in paragraph 8 of the Secretary-General's report (A/54/648) the total budget of all peacekeeping operations is now shortly expected to exceed $2,000 million per year.

3. This new estimate takes into account the establishment of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA), the expansion and conversion of the Observer Mission in Sierra Leone to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the establishment of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), developments concerning a future United Nations presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a possible major expansion of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

4. The Advisory Committee also notes that in addition to this, as indicated in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Secretary-General's report, the numbers of international civilian personnel troops, civilian police and military observers in peacekeeping operations will almost double. Moreover, a particularly striking feature related to the complexity of the mandates of some of these missions, and the larger civilian components associated with them, is the need for greater planning, guidance and coordination which, as indicated therein, constitutes a greater challenge and demand upon the Secretariat at every phase of the process.

5. As a consequence, the Secretary-General, in paragraph 10 of his report, is proposing to establish 67 additional posts to be funded from the support account, over and above the 400 approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/12 B. Of these total additional posts, 60 would be

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allocated to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2 to the Office of Legal Affairs, 2 to the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator, and 3 to the Procurement Division of the Office of Central Support Services. The Committee notes that the current number of authorized support account posts in those units are as follows: 287 in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 3 in the Office of Legal Affairs, 1 in the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and 25 in the Procurement Division. The related number of existing posts, description and justification of tasks are indicated in section III, A to D, of the Secretary-General's report.

6. The remaining 84 authorized support account posts are allocated as follows: Department of Management, Contributions Service (2), Treasury (4); Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, Peacekeeping Financing Division (30), Accounts Division (18); Office of Human Resources Management, Specialist Services Division (3), Operational Services Division (4), Medical Services Division (4); Office of Central Support Services, Facilities Management Division (1), Information Technology Services Division (1), Travel and Transportation (2); Executive Office of the Secretary-General (3); Office of Internal Oversight Services (12).

7. Upon inquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that there are currently four vacancies in respect of support account posts: two in the Peacekeeping Financing Division, one in the Office of Internal Oversight Services, and one in the Information Technology Services Division. The low number of current vacancies is attributable to the fact that in order to provide temporary capacity as a result of the establishment of UNMIK and UNTAET and pending submission of the revised requirements for the support account, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was authorized to recruit staff on a temporary basis.

8. The Committee notes that the Secretary-General is seeking authority to enter into commitments not to exceed $3,501,600 for the related costs of the additional 67 posts and to report thereon in the context of the performance report for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000. As shown in table 1 of the report (A/54/648), this would increase the resources of the support account by 10 per cent to $38,388,700. The Committee further notes that non-staffing requirements are not being requested at this time. The Committee was informed that the costing parameters utilized for the additional requirements assume a vacancy rate of 50 per cent.

9. The Committee was also informed, upon inquiry, that for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999, there is an estimated unencumbered balance of approximately $1,578,400; and that expenditures recorded for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 amount to $12,853,000 as of 30 November 1999.

10. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of the support account for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 are set out in paragraph 11 of the Secretary-General's report. The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the establishment of 67 temporary posts and that it authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not exceeding $3,501,600 for the related costs and report thereon in the context of the performance report for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000.

11. In accordance with current procedures, the Advisory Committee expects that full justification for the requirements of all support account posts will be provided in the context of the comprehensive annual proposals on the total requirement for human and financial resources from all sources of funding for all departments involved in the backstopping of peacekeeping operations to be submitted to the General Assembly, through the Advisory Committee, in spring 2000. The Advisory Committee stresses the importance of providing workload indicators in accordance with the Committee's recommendations in its report (A/51/906) and the provisions of General Assembly resolution 51/239 A of 17 June 1997. In this regard a database should be established and maintained for each unit.